This commentary is in response to the article by the Star Tribune regarding New Executive Director of Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, (MPHA) Gregory P. Russ published December 25th, 2016.

 <http://www.startribune.com/new-minneapolis-housing-director-brings-expertise-amid-uncertainty/408172976/>

Let me share my story, I am a low-income section 8 voucher renter. I used to live at CrossRoads at Penn Apartments in Richfield with my section 8 voucher. This was one of the largest buildings in the metro area with 700 apartments. CrossRoads at Penn supported all low-income families or disabled residents who were on fixed income. Our section 8 vouchers and other subsidy programs paid full market rate to the private landlord, along with 30% of our income to rent.

The apartments were near a bus line. I had access to a shopping mall, my church, all-medical, and a community I called home. With a 30-day notice, the new owner told us that we had to leave.  CrossRoads at Penn was then converted to the upscale Concierge apartments displacing thousands of people. We had no place to go with our section 8 vouchers. We were pushed out of the community I called home. <http://www.startribune.com/upscale-apartment-makeover-forces-hundreds-to-move-in-richfield/350820061>

Without a car now, I have relocated 1.5 miles further west. I am home bound without proper bus service, in a food desert and, often, not even sidewalks.  As one of many without support from my city, my elected officials, or that new developer, I will suffer repercussions of poverty in the loss of my home for years to come. Many, many low-income or income based apartments are being lost in the Twin Cities while institutions whitewash what they are knowingly doing to working class, low income families and the poor. People of color, diverse immigrant communities, and people with disabilities are being deliberately removed and further disenfranchised. Whole communities are being destroyed. You who are watching gentrification for profit and communities being destroyed. What we experienced in CrossRoads at Penn will also happen to MPHA Glendale Residents when the new Executive Director Gregory P. Russ takes office in February of 2017. Without proper vetting or community engagement, Council Member Lisa Goodman and her supporters and MPHA Commissioners such as F. Clayton Tyler recruited this man all the way from Cambridge Public Housing in Massachusetts to destroy Glendale and other public housing in Minneapolis. Russ's record show that Cambridge Public Housing was all converted to private development, gentrification took place, and rents went up during Russ’s leadership as the Executive Director.

Why did they bring Russ here? Because he is the national expert of converting public housing to private developments. This will displace Glendale residents just like CrossRoads. We have to remember Glendale Townhomes is public housing on public land; not section 8 which is for private developers. But, once Russ converts the land to private development, there is no way these families will keep their homes or community.

Just like what happened to us, Russ will first displace residents, then - in the example of Glendale Townhomes - he will convert the land from public to private property. The land may be empty for years, as development for new condos will then take place. The private landlord, if he/she has a kind heart, may house a minimal few section 8 apartments that will hardly be adequate for the original community of Glendale or be enough to also house the long waiting list for income based housing. The Glendale Townhomes will get a new, toney name - just like we became The Concierge - to erase the significance of the historic community of Glendale. Then it will be out of the hands of MPHA, as well, and then in time the section 8 residents will be told to move out when the landlord makes the property 100% upscale, market-rate apartments, or even condos. The few, last standing income based apartments will then be out of the Prospect Park Neighborhood. Glendale will be erased from history. It will not look the same, feel the same, or be the same. You will not see children playing in the park, their daily school buses, or families enjoying their community center for after-school programming.  This will all be done in the name of profit and gentrification.

It is sad and unfortunate that the City Council of Minneapolis, who is responsible for MPHA, and who all voted yes for Mr. Russ are ignoring the trend of  massive gentrification and destruction of communities they are setting for decades to come by approving Mr. Russ and his agenda. I hope our city officials, commissioners, mayors, senators, governor and local and state representatives will urgently wake up to this housing crisis and the attack on  low-income, working class and poor people before it destroys our beautiful state of Minnesota.

**Lindalee soderstrom**

**Displaced low-income resident from CrossRoads at Penn**